Sometimes a man is as badly frightened by an imaginary snake as a woman is by a real mouse.



SERIAL STORY

# INTO THE PRIMITIVE

By

**ROBERT AMES BENNET**

Illustrations by

**RAY WALTERS**



**SYNOPSIS.**

The story opens with the shipwreck of the steamer on which Miss Genevieve Leslie, an American heiress, Lord Winthrope, an Englishman, and Tom Blake, a brusque American, were passengers. The three were tossed upon an uninhabited island and were the only ones not drowned. Blake recovered from a drunken stupor. Blake, shunned on the boat, because of his roughness, became a hero as preserver of the helpless pair. The Englishman was suing for the hand of Miss Leslie. Blake started to swim back to the ship to recover what was left. Blake returned safely. Winthrope wasted his last match on a cigarette, for which he was scored by Blake. Their first meal was a dead fish. The trio started a ten mile hike for higher land. Thirst attacked them. Blake was compelled to carry Miss Leslie on account of weariness.

**CHAPTER IV.—Continued.**

At first his throat was so dry that he could no more than rinse his mouth. With the first swallow his swollen tongue mocked him with the salt, bitter taste of sea-water. The tide was flowing! He rose, sputtering and choking and gasping He stared around. There was no question that he was on the bank of a river and would be certain of fresh water with the ebb tide. But could he endure the agony of his thirst all those hours?

He thought of his companions.

"Good God!" he groaned, "they're goners, anyway!"

He stared dully up the river at the thousands of waterfowl which lined its banks. Within close view were herons and black ibises, geese, pelicans, flamingoes, and a dozen other species of birds of which he did not know the names. But he sat as though in a stupor, and did not move even when one of the driftwood logs on a mud-shoal a few yards up-stream opened an enormous mouth and displayed two rows of hooked fangs. It was otherwise when the noontime stillness was broken by a violent splashing and loud snortings down-stream. He glanced about and saw six or eight monstrous heads drifting towards him with the tide.

"What in— Whee! a whole herd of hippos!" he muttered. "That's what the holes mean."

The foremost hippopotamus was headed directly for him. He glared at the huge head with sullen resentment. For all his stupor he perceived at once that the beast intended to land; and he sat in the middle of its accustomed path. His first impulse was to spring up and yell at the creature. Then he remembered hearing that a white hunter had recently been killed by these beasts on one of the South African lakes. Instead of leaping up he sank down almost flat and crawled back around the turn in the path. Once certain that he was hidden from the beasts he rose to his feet and hastened back through the jungle.

He was almost in view of the spot where he had left Winthrope and Miss Leslie, when he stopped and stood hesitating.

"I can't do it," he muttered; "I can't tell her—poor girl!"

He turned and pushed into the thicket. Forcing a way through the tangle of thorny shrubs and creepers until several yards from the path he began to edge towards the face of the jungle, that he might peer out at his companions unseen by them.

There was more of the thicket before him than he had thought, and he was still fighting his way through it when he was brought to a stand by a peculiar cry that might have been the bleat of a young lamb: "Ba—ba!"

"What's that?" he croaked.

He stood listening, and in a moment he again heard the cry, this time more distinctly: "Blak!—Blak!"

There could be no mistake. It was Winthrope calling for him, and calling with a clearness of voice that would have been physically impossible half an hour since. Blake's sunken eyes lighted with hope. He burst through the last screen of jungle and stared towards the palm under which he had left his companions. They were not there.

Another call from Winthrope directed his gaze more seaward. The two were seated beside a fallen palm and Miss Leslie had a large round object raised to her lips. Winthrop was waving to him.

"Cocoanuts!" he yelled. "Come on!"

Three of the palms had been overthrown by the hurricane, and when Blake came up he found the ground strewn with nuts. He seized the first he came to; but Winthrope held out one already opened. He snatched it from him and placed the hole to his swollen lips. Never had champagne tasted half so delicious as that cocoanut milk. Before he could drain the last of it through the little opening Winthrope had the husks torn from the ends of two other nuts, and the convenient germinal spots gouged open with his penknife.

Blake emptied the third before he spoke. Even then his voice was hoarse and strained. "How'd you strike 'em?"

"I couldn't help it," explained Winthrope. "Hardly had you disappeared when I noticed the tops of the fallen palms and thought of the nuts. There was one in the grass not 20 feet from where we lay."

"Lucky for you—and for me, too, I guess," said Blake. "We were all three down for the count. But this settles the first round in our favor. How do you like the picnic, Miss Jenny?"

"Miss Leslie, if you please," replied the girl, with hauteur.

"Oh, say, Miss Jenny!" protested Blake, genially. "We live in the same boarding house now. Why not be folksy? You're free to call me Tom. Pass me another nut, Winthrope. Thanks! By the way, what's your front name? Saw it aboard ship—Cyril—"

"Cecil," corrected Winthrope, in a low tone.

"Cecil—Lord Cecil, eh?—or is it only the Honorable Cecil?"

"My dear sir, I have intimated before that, for reasons of—er—state—"

"Oh, yes; you're traveling incog., in the secret service. Sort of detective—"

"Detective!" echoed Winthrope, in a peculiar tone.

Blake grinned. "Well, it is rawther a nawsty business for your honorable ludship. But there's nothing like calling things by their right names."

"Right names—er—I don't quite take you. I have told you distinctly my name is Cecil Winthrope!"

"O-h-h! how lovely!—See-sill! See-seal!—Bet they called you Sissy at school. English chum of mine told me

Blake Pushed Out from Among the Close Thickets.

your schools are corkers for nicknames. What'll we make it—Sis or Sissy?"

"I prefer my patronymic, Mr. Blake," replied Winthrope.

"All right, then; we'll make it Pat, if that's your choice. I say, Pat, this juice is the stuff for wetness, but it makes a fellow remember his grub. Where'd you leave that fish?"

"Really, I can't just say, but it must have been where I wrenched my ankle."

"You cawn't just say! And what are we going to eat?"

"Here are the cocoanuts."

"Bright boy! go to the head of the class! Just take some more husk off those empty ones."

Winthrope caught up one of the nuts, and with the aid of his knife stripped it of its husk. At a gesture from Blake he laid it on the bare ground and the American burst it open with a blow of his heel. It was an immature nut, and the meat proved to be little thicker than clotted cream. Blake divided it into three parts, handing Miss Leslie the cleanest.

Though his companions began with more restraint, they finished their shares with equal gusto. Winthrope needed no further orders to return to his husking. One after another the nuts were cracked and divided among the three, until even Blake could not swallow another mouthful of the luscious cream.

Toward the end Miss Leslie had become drowsy. At Winthrope's urging, she now lay down for a nap, Blake's coat serving as a pillow. She fell asleep while Winthrope was yet arranging it for her. Blake had turned his back on her and was staring moodily at the hippopotamus trail when Winthrope hobbled around and sat down on the palm trunk beside him.

"I say, Blake," he suggested, "I feel deuced fagged myself. Why not all take a nap?"

"'And when they awoke, they were all dead men,'" remarked Blake.

"By Jove, that sounds like a joke," protested the Englishman. "Don't rag me now."

"Joke!" repeated Blake. "Why, that's Scripture, Pat, Scripture! Anyway, you'd think it no joke to wake up and find yourself going down the throat of a hippo."

"Hippo?"

"Dozens of them over in the river. Shouldn't wonder if they've all landed and're tracking me down by this time."

"But hippopotami are not carnivorous—they're not at all dangerous, unless one wounds them, out in the water."

"That may be; but I'm not taking chances. They've got mouths like sperm whales—I saw one take a yawn. Another thing, that bayou is chuck full of alligators, and a fellow down on the Rand told me they're like the Central American gavials for keenness to nip a swimmer."

"They will not come out on this dry land."

"Suppose they won't—there're no other animals in Africa but sheep, eh?"

"What can we do? The captain told me that there are both lions and leopards on this coast."

"Nice place for them, too, around these trees," added Blake. "Lucky for us, they're night-birds mostly—if that Rand fellow didn't lie. He was a Boer, so I guess he ought to know."

"To be sure. It's a nasty fix we're in for to-night. Could we not build some kind of a barricade?"

"With a penknife! Guess we'll roost in a tree."

"But cannot leopards climb? It seems to me that I have heard—"

"How about lions?"

"They cannot; I'm sure of that."

"Then we'll chance the leopards. Just stretch out here and nurse that ankle of yours. I don't want to be lugging you all year. I'm going to hunt a likely tree."

**CHAPTER V.**

**The Re-Ascent of Man.**

AFTERNOON was far advanced and Winthrope was beginning to feel anxious when at last Blake pushed out from among the close thickets. As he approached he swung an unshapely club of green wood, pausing every few paces to test its weight and balance on a bush or knob of dirt.

"By Jove!" called Winthrope; "that's not half bad! You look as if you could bowl over an ox."

Blake showed that he was flattered.

"Oh, I don't know," he responded; "the thing's blamed unhandy Just the same, I guess we'll be ready for callers to-night."

"How's that?"

"Show you later, Pat, me b'y. Now trot out some nuts. We'll feed before we move camp."

"Miss Leslie is still sleeping."

"Time, then, to roust her out. Hey, Miss Jenny, turn out! Time to chew."

Miss Leslie sat up and gazed around in bewilderment.

"It's all right, Miss Genevieve," reassured Winthrope. "Blake has found a safe place for the night, and he wishes us to eat before we leave here."

"Save lugging the grub," added Blake. "Get busy, Pat."

As Winthrope caught up a nut the girl began to arrange her disordered hair and dress with the deft and graceful movements of a woman thoroughly trained in the art of self-adornment. There was admiration in Blake's deep eyes as he watched her dainty preening. She was not a beautiful girl—at present she could hardly be termed pretty; yet even in her draggled, muddy dress she retained all the subtle charms of culture which appeal so strongly to a man. Blake was subdued. His feelings even carried him so far as an attempt at formal politeness when they had finished their meal.

"Now, Miss Leslie," he began, "it's little more than half an hour to sundown; so, if you please, if you're ready, we'd best be starting."

"Is it far?"

"Not so very. But we've got to chase through the jungle. Are you sure you're quite ready?"

"Quite, thank you. But how about Mr. Winthrope's ankle?"

"He'll ride as far as the trees. I can't squeeze through with him, though."

"I shall walk all the way," put in Winthrope.

"No, you won't. Climb aboard," replied Blake, and catching up his club he stooped for Winthrope to mount his back. As he rose with his burden Miss Leslie caught sight of his coat, which still lay in a roll beside the palm trunk.

"How about your coat, Mr. Blake?" she asked. "Should you not put it on?"

"No; I'm loaded now. Have to ask you to look after it. You may need it before morning, anyway. If the dews here are like those in Central America they are d-darned liable to bring on malarial fever."

Nothing more was said until they had crossed the open space between the palms and the belt of jungle along the river. At other times Winthrope and Miss Leslie might have been interested in the towering screw-palms, festooned to the top with climbers, and in the huge ferns which they could see beneath the mangroves in the swampy ground on their left. Now, however, they were far too concerned with the question of how they should penetrate the dense tangle of thorny brush and creepers which rose before them like a green wall. Even Blake hesitated as he released Winthrope and looked at Miss Leslie's costume. Her white skirt was of stout duck; but the flimsy material of her waist was ill-suited for rough usage.

"Better put the coat on unless you want to come out on the other side in full evening dress," he said. "There's no use kicking, but I wish you'd happened to have on some sort of a jacket when we got spilled."

"Is there no path through the thicket?" inquired Winthrope.

"Only the hippo trail, and it don't go our way. We've got to run our own line. Here's a stick for your game ankle."

Winthrope took the half-green branch which Blake broke from the nearest tree and turned to assist Miss Leslie with the coat. The garment was of such coarse cloth that as Winthrope drew the collar close about her throat Miss Leslie could not forego a little grimace of repugnance. The crease between Blake's eyes deepened, and the girl hastened to utter an explanatory exclamation: "Not so tight, Mr. Winthrope, please! It scratches my neck."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**THE BABY HATES LIGHT.**

**Is Born Without Protection from Dazzling Brightness.**

Another thing which we must learn to appreciate and respect in the baby is his attitude toward light. This is widely different from ours. Light is one of the most stimulating and attractive things in the world to us; and the brighter, the better. Witness the glitter of the gin palace and the blaze of Coney Island. But to a poor, blinking tot of a baby it is as dazzling and irritating as it is grateful to us. His chief objection to the new world in which he finds himself, if he could put it in words, would be: "It's so beastly light." He is born a caveman in more senses than one. While the rooms which he occupies should get plenty of sunshine, this should never be allowed to shine directly into his eyes or full upon his face. He has neither pigment in his tender skin nor hair on the top of his pink little head to protect him against the light rays; and it is little short of "cruelty to animals" to lay an unfortunate baby on his back in a trough-like perambulator, or baby buggy, so deep and well padded that he cannot even squirm; to load him down with clothing and wraps, or even actually strap him down so that he can lift neither hand nor foot; and then to wheel him about for hours with his little face turned up to the full glare of the light and even the direct rays of the sun. Here is where the foundation of many a case of headache, of irritable nerves, of fretfulness—with its accompanying indigestion and sleeplessness—is laid. —Dr. Woods Hutchinson, in Success Magazine.

**Crocodiles Along the Nile.**

At the sound of the shot the whole of this bank of the river, over the extent of at least a quarter of a mile, sprang into hideous life, and my companions and I saw hundreds of crocodiles, of all sorts and sizes, rushing madly into the Nile, whose waters along the line of the shore were lashed into white foam, exactly as a heavy wave had broken.

It could be no exaggeration to say that at least a thousand of these saurians had been disturbed at a single shot.—Strand Magazine.

**Indisputable.**

Two tourists on a personally conducted tour were overheard talking together in the window of a Florence hotel overlooking the Arno.

"This does not look to me like Venice," said the first. "I do not see a single gondola."

"No," admitted her companion, "but it must be Venice. You know we were to be in Venice on Wednesday."—Harper's Monthly.

**Ahead of the Game.**

Byker—I attended a successful sleight-of-hand performance last night.

Pyker—So?

Hyker—Yes. I lent the conjurer a counterfeit dollar and he gave me back a good one.